

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action mailed June 30, 2004, Claims 1-30 were noted as pending in the application. Claims 8-15 and 17-19 were allowed, Claims 1-7, 16, and 20-30 were rejected, and Claims 16, 23, and 24 were found objectionable.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's recognition of the merit of Claims 8-15 and 17-19, and hereby seeks issuance of a patent for such Claims. Accordingly, by the present Amendment, Claims 1-7, 16, and 20-30 have been cancelled, leaving only allowed Claims 8-15 and 17-19 pending in the application.

In order to place the Claims in better form for issuance in a patent, Claims 8, 9, and 19 have been amended to correct minor errors therein. Applicant has not made these amendments for the purpose of meeting the Patent Act's requirements (such Claims already have been allowed). Accordingly, Applicant asserts that it is not prohibited from asserting infringement by equivalents of the claimed elements under case law established by *Festo Corp. v. Shoketsu Kinzoku Kogyo Kabushiki Co., Ltd., et al.*, 344 F.3d 1359, 68 U.S.P.Q.2d 1321 (Fed. Cir. 2003).

There being no further issues with respect to Claims 8-15 and 17-19, a Notice of Allowance for such Claims is earnestly solicited.

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It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

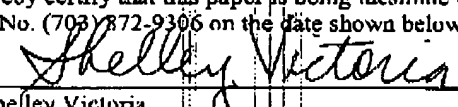


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I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the US Patent and Trademark Office at
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Shelley Victoria

September 22, 2004
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